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In a society where mutants and non-mutants alike feel threatened by the hostile world around them, they turn to their first, best line of defense whenever trouble arises: X-Factor, the private detective agency founded by Madrox, the Multiple Man.

Previously in X-FACTOR...

Mutantkind was nearing extinction, until for the first time since before M-Day, a mutant baby was born. A race to get control of the child followed, with different groups hoping to protect, manipulate, destroy and even devour the new mutant. In an attempt to learn about what the future held for the baby, Cyclops sent one of Jamie Madrox's duplicates into the future, where he was branded as a mutant. Though it wasn't part of the plan, Layla Miller tagged along with the dupe. Meanwhile in the present, Cyclops assembled the new X-Force team—a secret strike-force that Wolfsbane is unable to talk about.

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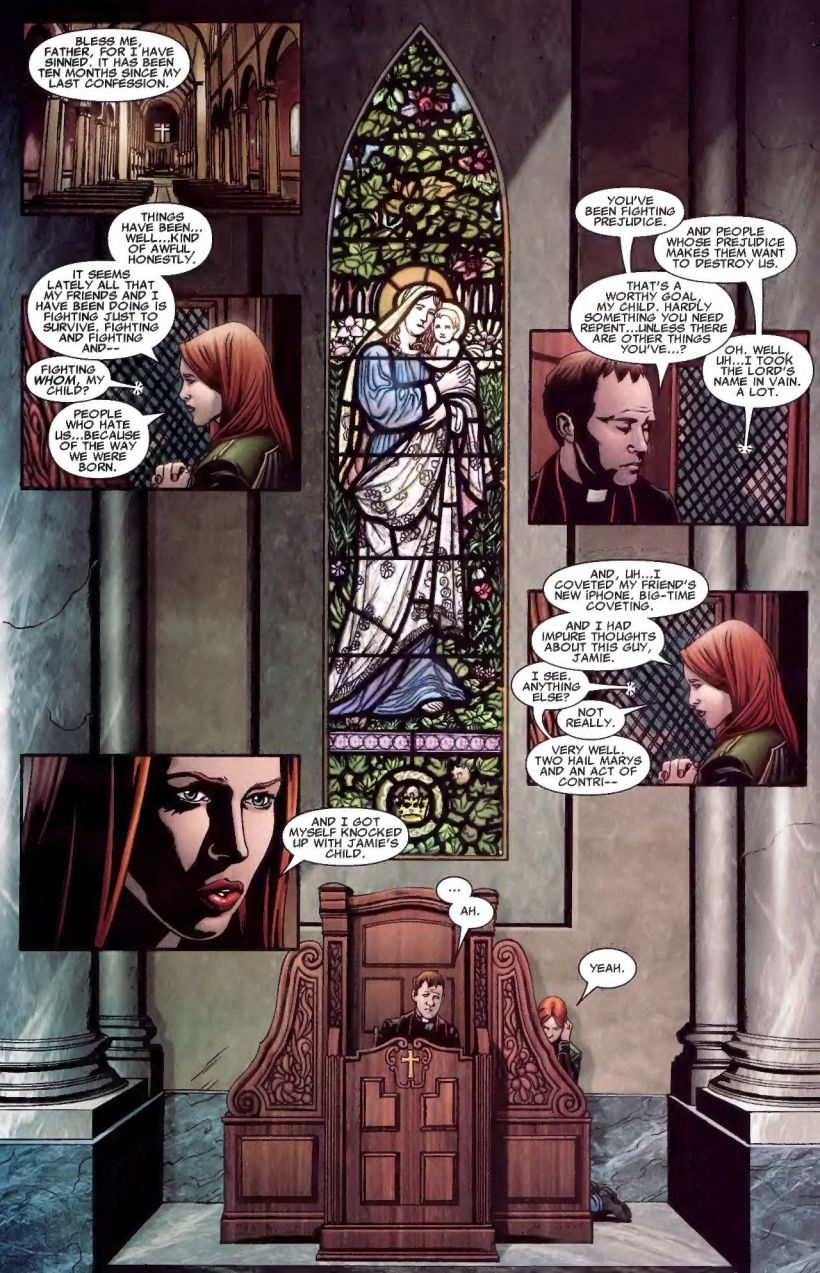
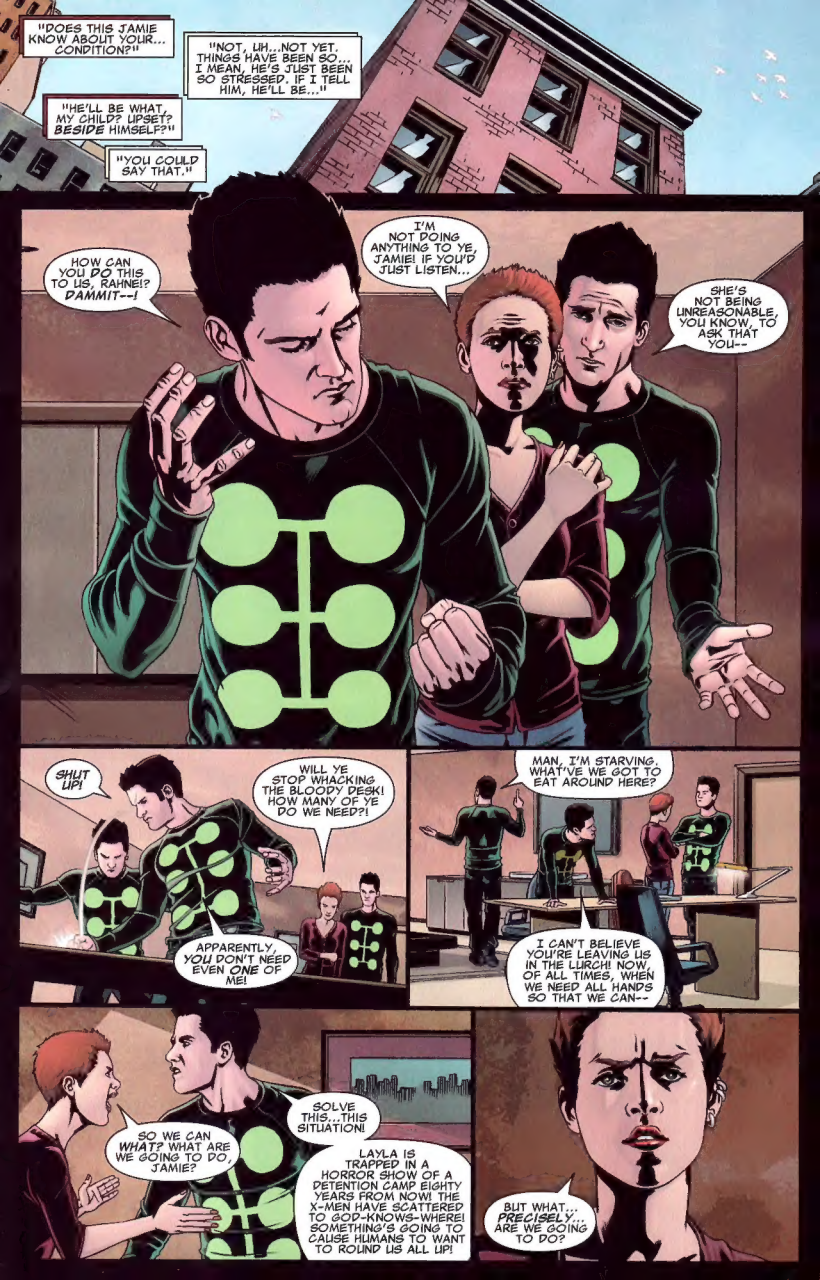

BLESS ME, FATHER, FOR I HAVE SINNED. IT HAS BEEN TEN MONTHS SINCE MY LAST CONFESSION.
THINGS HAVE BEEN... WELL... KIND OF AWFUL, HONESTLY.
IT SEEMS LATELY ALL THAT MY FRIENDS AND I HAVE BEEN DOING IS FIGHTING JUST TO SURVIVE. FIGHTING AND FIGHTING AND--
FIGHTING WHOM, MY CHILD?
PEOPLE WHO HATE US...BECAUSE OF THE WAY WE WERE BORN.
YOU'VE BEEN FIGHTING PREJUDICE.
AND PEOPLE WHOSE PREJUDICE MAKES THEM WANT TO DESTROY US.
THAT'S A WORTHY GOAL, MY CHILD. HARDLY SOMETHING YOU NEED REPENT...UNLESS THERE ARE OTHER THINGS YOU'VE...?
OH. WELL UH...I TOOK THE LORD'S NAME IN VAIN. A LOT.
AND, UH...I COVETED MY FRIEND'S NEW IPHONE. BIG-TIME COVETING.
AND I HAD IMPURE THOUGHTS ABOUT THIS GUY, JAMIE.
I SEE. ANYTHING ELSE?
NOT REALLY.
VERY WELL. TWO HAIL MARYS AND AN ACT OF CONTRI--
AND I GOT MYSELF KNOCKED UP WITH JAMIE'S CHILD.
...
AH.
YEAH.

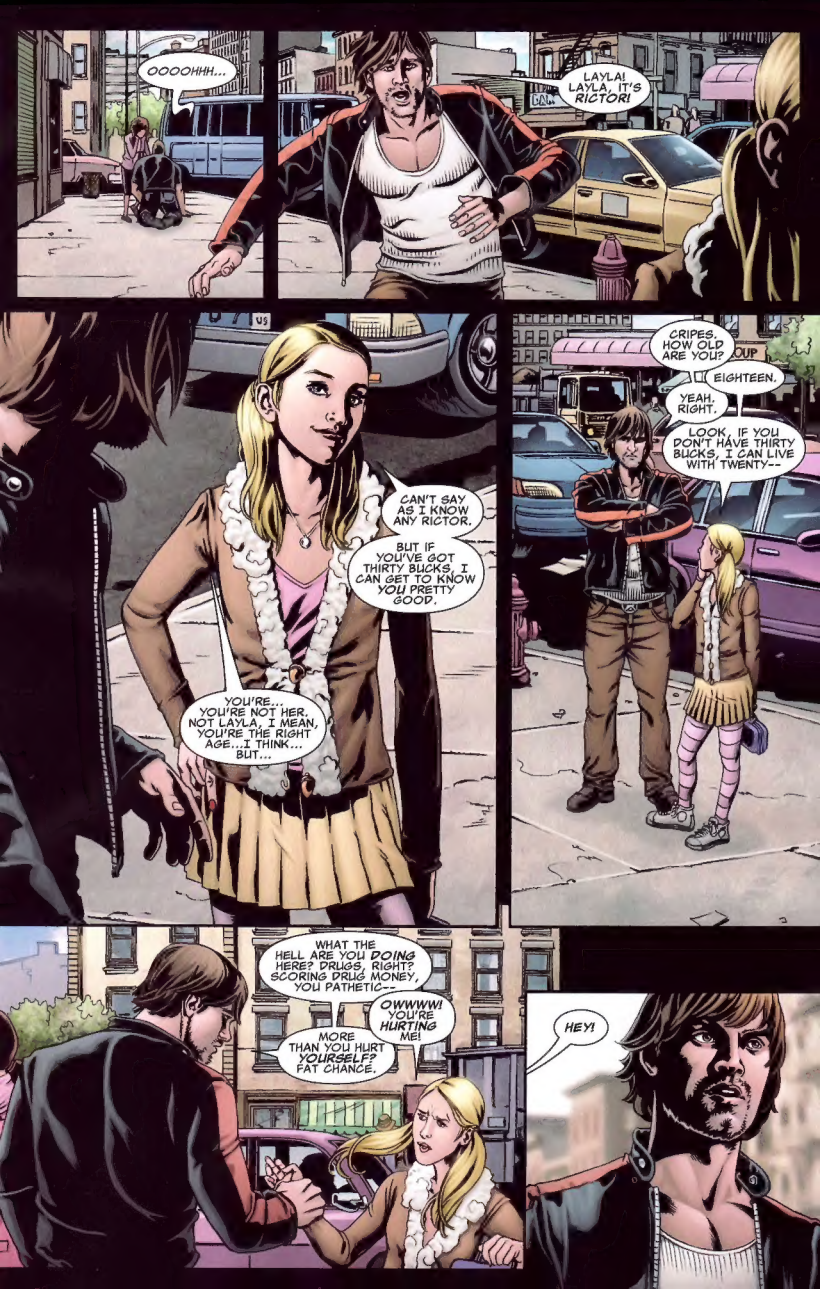

"DOES THIS JAMIE KNOW ABOUT YOUR... CONDITION?"
"NOT, UH...NOT YET. THINGS HAVE BEEN SO... I MEAN, HE'S JUST BEEN SO STRESSED. IF I TELL HIM, HE'LL BE..."
"HE'LL BE WHAT, MY CHILD? UPSET? BESIDE HIMSELF?"
"YOU COULD SAY THAT."
HOW CAN YOU DO THIS TO US, RAHNE!? DAMMIT--!
I'M NOT DOING ANYTHING TO YE, JAMIE! IF YOU'D JUST LISTEN...
SHE'S NOT BEING UNREASONABLE, YOU KNOW, TO ASK THAT YOU--
SHUT UP!
WILL YE STOP WHACKING THE BLOODY DESK! HOW MANY OF YE DO WE NEED?!
APPARENTLY, YOU DON'T NEED EVEN ONE OF ME!
MAN, I'M STARVING. WHAT'VE WE GOT TO EAT AROUND HERE?
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE LEAVING US IN THE LURCH! NOW, OF ALL TIMES, WHEN WE NEED ALL HANDS SO THAT WE CAN--
SO WE CAN WHAT? WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO, JAMIE?
SOLVE THIS...THIS SITUATION!
LAYLA IS TRAPPED IN A HORROR SHOW OF A DETENTION CAMP EIGHTY YEARS FROM NOW! THE X-MEN HAVE SCATTERED TO GOD-KNOWS-WHERE! SOMETHING'S GOING TO CAUSE HUMANS TO WANT TO ROUND US ALL UP!
BUT WHAT... PRECISELY... ARE WE GOING TO DO?

I DON'T KNOW! I DON'T FREAKING KNOW! OKAY? HAPPY? I--
STOP YELLING AT HER! DON'T YOU SEE THAT THIS WILL JUST DRIVE HER AWAY FASTER!
DID YOU EVER THINK MAYBE IT'S YOUR FAULT THAT SHE'S LEAVING IN THE--
YEAH, OKAY, YOU'RE DONE.
JAMIE...
WHAT?
WE'VE BEEN GOING BACK AND FORTH ON THIS FOR HALF AN HOUR. CAN'T YE RESPECT THAT I'VE MADE UP MY MIND, THAT I HAVE MUH REASONS, THAT...
NO. I'M SORRY, RAHNE. I CAN'T RESPECT THAT.
I CAN'T RESPECT SOMEONE WHO BAILS ON HER FRIENDS AND WON'T SAY WHY.
ESPECIALLY WHEN I'VE ALWAYS BELIEVED HER THE MOST SINCERE... THE MOST HONEST...THE MOST SPIRITUALLY ANCHORED PERSON I'VE EVER KNOWN.
I CAN'T RESPECT A HYPOCRITE.
GO. GO AND BE DAMNED. SEE WHAT I CARE.

YE BLOODY--! HOW DARE YE! WHO THE HELL DO YE THINK YE ARE!
I THOUGHT I WAS YOUR FRIEND! OBVIOUSLY, I THOUGHT WRONG! BUT DON'T WORRY, YOU'RE MAKING IT ABUNDANTLY CLEAR THAT--
I KILLED YE! THE BOTH OF YE!
UH... WHAT?
"IT WAS WHAT TRYP SENIOR SHOWED ME, YOU AND LAYLA, AND SHE WAS GROWN-UP...AND IT WAS YER WEDDING NIGHT..."
"AND I WAS STANDING OVER BOTH OF YE. I'D GUTTED YE. AND...AND KNOWING THIS, IT'S BEEN EATING AWAY AT ME...I..."
I HAVE AN... AN OPPORTUNITY... TO GO ELSEWHERE... AND I HAVE TO SEIZE THAT OPPORTUNITY, FOR BOTH YUIR SAKES...
WHAT BOTH?! LAYLA'S GONE!
BUT SHE'LL COME BACK TO YE! I'VE SEEN IT!
AND I CAN'T BE HERE WHEN IT HAPPENS! I...
I'M SORRY... I'M SO SORRY... YE MUST HATE ME...
I WANT TO, GOD, I WANT TO. BUT I DON'T SAY IT.
SHE STILL HASN'T TOLD ME THE WHOLE TRUTH. I KNOW IT.

BAR
JUST AS SHE HASN'T TOLD ME ABOUT HER INVOLVEMENT WITH RICTOR...EXCEPT SHE DOESN'T KNOW I FIGURED IT OUT.
I SHOULD BE ANGRY AT HER... BUT AT THE SAME TIME, I KNOW HOW SHE FEELS.
24 DELI
VOTE SAXON
BETWEEN EVERYTHING THAT WE'VE SEEN...EXPERIENCED...THE FUTURE ISN'T SOME ABSTRACT CONCEPT, UNDEFINED AND UNKNOWN.
IT'S BEARING DOWN ON US LIKE A FREIGHT TRAIN. WHO WOULDN'T WANT TO FIND SOME MEANS OF GETTING OUT OF ITS WAY?
STILL, IN THE END, I CAN'T BE TOO ANGRY WITH HER FOR THE THINGS SHE'S HELD BACK... THANKS TO THE HOPE THAT SHE'S GIVEN ME.
UNDER CONSTRUCTION:
GAMEDAY IMPROVEMENTS
NYC TAXI
WE'RE GOING TO GET LAYLA BACK.
BUT MY HOPE IS TEMPERED WITH BURNING FURY BECAUSE I DON'T KNOW HOW TO BRING THAT ABOUT.
I'VE GOT TO FIND A WAY. I'VE GOT TO FIND--
LAYLA?
LAYLA!!!

LAYLA!
WATCH IT, JERK!
LAYLA!!!
WILL YOU FOR THE LUVVA--?!?
YOU'RE ONE OF THEM X-FACTOR GUYS, AIN'T'CHA? IN THE MIDDLE OF SOME OTHER FIGHT NOW?
WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO PROVE, HUH? THAT YOU'RE THE BIG BAD PROTECTORS OF MUTANT TOWN?
WHY DON'T YOU JUST CLEAR OUT WITH THE REST OF THE PANG AND LEAVE US OUT OF--
UNNFFFFF!
LET GO, IMBECIL!
YOU TELL HIM, HONEY!
HELLO! LOOK AROUND! THERE AIN'T NO MORE MUTANTS!
NO ONE'S EVEN CALLING IT MUTANT TOWN! IT'S THE MIDDLE EAST SIDE!


OOOOHHH...
LAYLA! LAYLA, IT'S RICTOR!
CAN'T SAY AS I KNOW ANY RICTOR.
BUT IF YOU'VE GOT THIRTY BUCKS, I CAN GET TO KNOW YOU PRETTY GOOD.
YOU'RE... YOU'RE NOT HER. NOT LAYLA, I MEAN, YOU'RE THE RIGHT AGE...I THINK... BUT...
CRIPES. HOW OLD ARE YOU?
EIGHTEEN.
YEAH. RIGHT.
LOOK, IF YOU DON'T HAVE THIRTY BUCKS, I CAN LIVE WITH TWENTY--
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING HERE? DRUGS, RIGHT? SCORING DRUG MONEY, YOU PATHETIC--
OWWWW! YOU'RE HURTING ME!
MORE THAN YOU HURT YOURSELF? FAT CHANCE.
HEY!

NOBODY ROUGHS UP MY GIRLS! ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY HAVEN'T PAID FOR IT!
GUY'S GOTTA MAKE A LIVING, HOTSHOT.
YOUR GIRLS? YOU GOT MORE LIKE HER?
NOW I SUGGEST YOU JUST BACK OFF...
HEY FELLAS! LOOKS LIKE WE GOT US A HERO.
AND I SUGGEST YOU KISS MY--
LOOKS LIKE YOU DO.
YOU LOOKING FOR TROUBLE, HERO?
MORE THAN YOU CAN BELIEVE.
WELL, THEN, YOU FOUND MORE THAN YOU--
UNNHHHHHHH!!!!
KRAK!

WE NEEDED SOMETHING TO BELIEVE IN. ME, RICTOR, THE REST OF THE TEAM.
NEEDED TO BELIEVE WE WERE FIGHTING FOR SOMETHING.
FOR ACCEPTANCE OF MUTANTS. FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR RACE.
OR EVEN JUST MAKING OUR OWN LITTLE PIECE OF THE WORLD A BIT SAFER.
IT WAS A SHOCK TO REALIZE THAT IT WAS ALL ILLUSION.
THAT NOT ONLY COULD WE NOT MAKE MUTANT TOWN SAFER...
...WE COULDN'T EVEN KEEP OURSELVES SAFE.
SIRYN KIDNAPPED... GUIDO BRAINWASHED... RAHNE MENTALLY TRAUMATIZED...
BUT LOSING LAYLA...IT WAS LIKE...
MY GOD, HOW MUCH *PUNISHMENT* ARE WE SUPPOSED TO *ENDURE*?
WHEN LAYLA WAS HERE, WE LAUGHED AT HER WHOLE "I KNOW STUFF!" THING.
BUT WE ALSO HAD FAITH THAT WHAT SHE KNEW WOULD HELP US.
WHO'LL HELP US NOW?

HEY!
PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS SAYIN' I SHOULD PICK ON SOMEBODY MY OWN SIZE. SO HOWZABOUT THIS?
I MUSH ALL OF YOU GUYS TOGETHER INTO ONE BIG GUY AND THEN WE CAN FIGHT.
THAT WORK FOR YOU?
CHILI CERVEZA
HEY! YOU LITTLE PUNK! GET BACK HERE SO I CAN--!
SO YOU CAN WHAT?
AW CRAP. YOU'RE...YOU'RE STRONG GUY.
THAT'S WHAT IT SAYS ON MY ACTION FIGURE.
LOOK, UH...I, UH...I LEFT MY GIRL BEHIND AND SHE'S, UH, PROBABLY WONDERING WHERE I...UH...
CHILI CERVEZA

GET OUT OF MUTANT TOWN.
AND STAY OUT.
YOU OKAY, RIC?
DON'T I LOOK OKAY?
NOT SO MUCH.
LOOK, THERE'S AN E.R. ABOUT A BLOCK AWAY. MEBBE WE SHOULD SWING BY IT, HUH?
I CAN GET THERE FINE BY MYSELF.
RIC...THIS IS ME, OKAY? YA DON'T HAVE TO DO THE MACHO THING.
I'M NOT BEING MACHO, I JUST...I'M SICK O' PEOPLE THINKING I'M WEAK.
HELL, I STOOD UP TO THAT ISOLATIONIST GUY. TOOK THE BEST SHOTS AND KEPT COMIN' BACK FOR MORE...
YEAH, BEEN MEANIN' TO ASK YOU 'BOUT THAT. HOW'D YOU MANAGE IT?
NO CLUE.
HOW 'BOUT YOU HEAD BACK TO H.Q. I CAN HANDLE THIS.
MAN, I WISH I COULD. I WISH I KNEW HOW TO QUIT YOU.
YOU'RE A RIOT, GUIDO.
YEAH. I'M A MILLION LAUGHS.

HA. HA. HA.
VERY FUNNY.
I'M SERIOUS, MONET. I'M LEAVING.
AND I'M SUPPOSED TO... WHAT? BE UPSET ABOUT IT?
I CAN'T TELL YE HOW TO FEEL.
OH, BULL. YOU'RE ALWAYS TRYING TO TELL ME HOW TO FEEL.
YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN THE MOST SANCTIMONIOUS, HOLIER-THAN-THOU...
PLEASE... MONET... I'M BEGGING YE...
CAN WE NOT DO THIS?
FINE. WHATEVER.
...
WHAT DID JAMIE SAY? AND RICTOR?
WE HUGGED. THEN HE WENT OUT.
AND I'M... HOPING TO LEAVE BEFORE I SEE RICTOR. HE...WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND.
OH, RIGHT. AS COMPARED TO THE REST OF US WHO DO.

HERE, I GOT THIS FOR YOU.
AN... iPHONE? WHY?
ACTUALLY, I GOT ONE FOR THERESA, BECAUSE SHE KEPT EYEING MINE AND IT WAS GETTING ON MY NERVES.
AND THEN I FIGURED, HELL, I DIDN'T NEED YOU GETTING JEALOUS, SO I GOT YOU ONE, TOO. AND ONE FOR LAYLA BEFORE SHE... YOU KNOW.
MONET, THAT'S SUCH A KIND GESTURE, I DON'T KNOW HOW TO...
BUT YOU'RE LEAVING, SO... THAT'S THAT.
IF AND WHEN YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND, I'LL KEEP THE ONE I BOUGHT FOR LAYLA MINT IN THE BOX FOR YOU.
LAYLA'S COMING BACK.
SURE. RIGHT.
SINCLAIR.
AYE?
DON'T BE A STRANGER.
OR AT LEAST DON'T BE STRANGER THAN YOU ALREADY ARE.

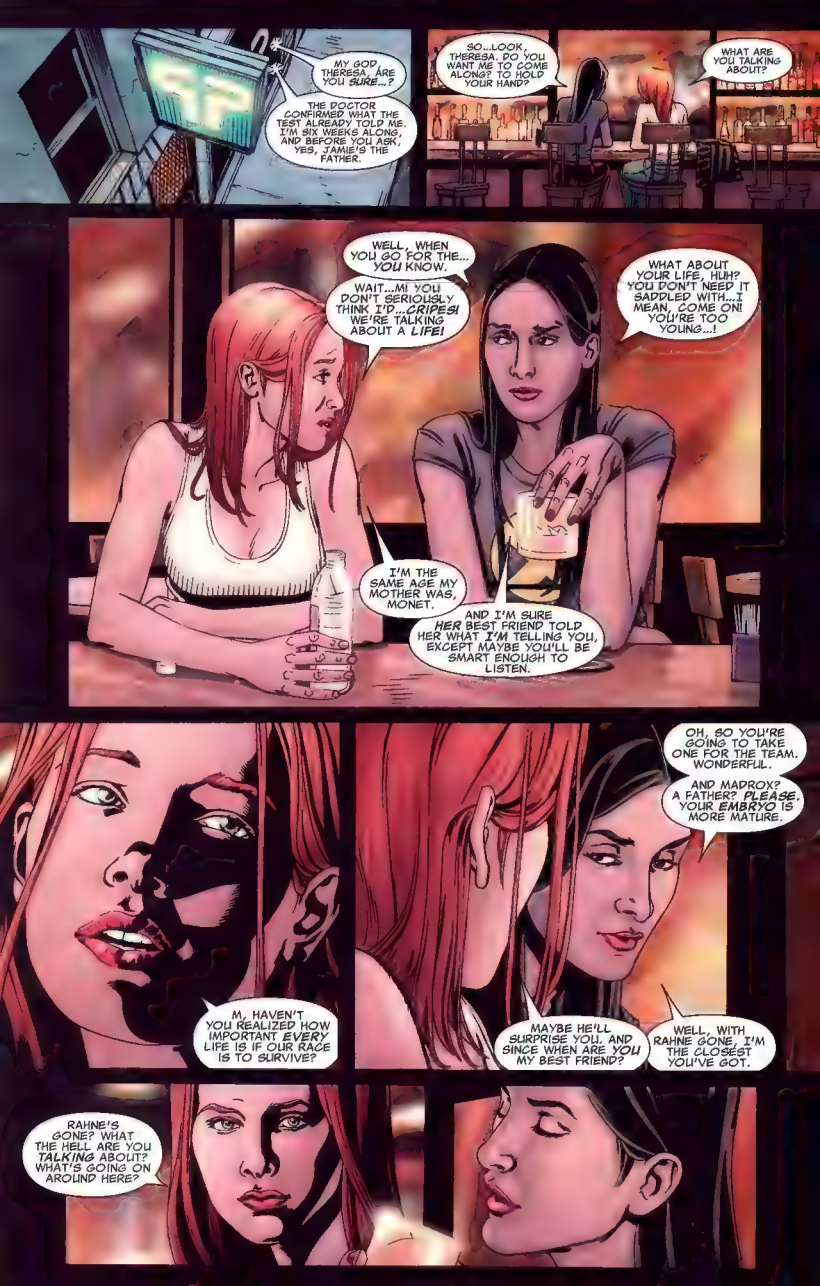
THIS IS MADROX. ACTUALLY, THIS IS HIS VOICEMAIL. PLEASE LEAVE A MESSAGE. *CLICK*
YEAH, MADROX? THIS IS GUIDO.
WHICH YA PROB'LY FIGURED WHEN YA HEARD IT, 'CAUSE MY VOICE IS...Y'KNOW, KINDA...
LOOK, ANYWAY, I FIGURED YOU'D WANNA KNOW THAT RICTOR IS--
FDNY
I'LL CALL YA BACK.
YO, MADROX.
WHERE YA GOING?
I'M LOOKING FOR SOME GUYS TO BEAT THE CRAP OUT OF.
WELL, I ALREADY BEAT THE CRAP OUTTA SOME GUYS, SO I FILLED MY QUOTA FOR T'DAY. BUT SOMETIMES I JUST LIKE T'WATCH.
I CAN RELATE.
LOOKING FOR ANY GUYS IN PARTICULAR TO BEAT UP?
SCHEDULED FOR DEMOLITION BY GAMMAX IMPROVEMENTS
ACTUALLY, FROM SOME THINGS I'VE BEEN HEARING AROUND THE POWER PLANT...
I THINK I'VE GOT THE PERFECT CANDIDATES.

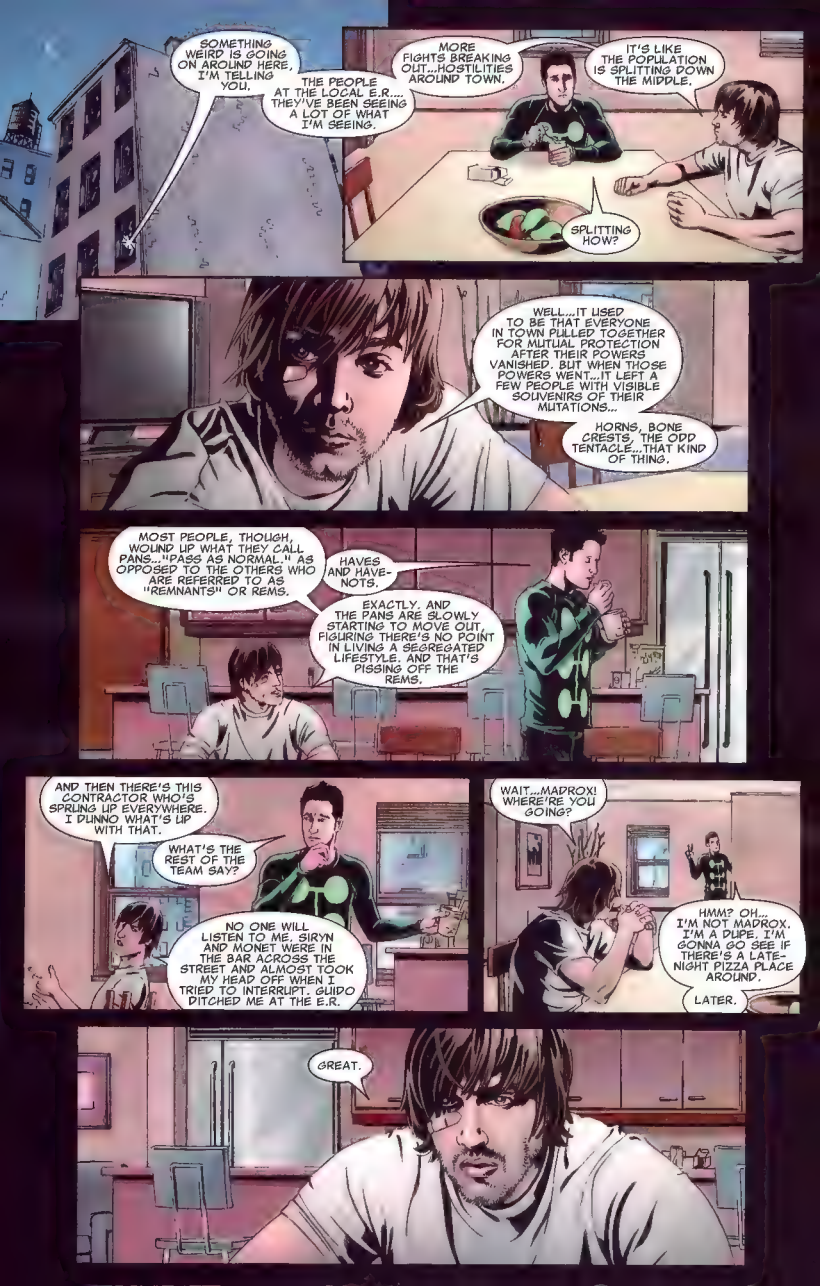
THIS HAS BEEN A DIFFICULT TIME FOR OUR CAUSE. WE PURIFIERS TOOK A MAJOR HIT.
WE THOUGHT WE HAD THE FUTURE OF MUTANTKIND IN OUR GRASP...A FUTURE THAT WE WERE GOING TO BE ABLE TO CUT SHORT... AND THEN IT SLIPPED AWAY.
BUT TAKE HEART, MY BROTHERS, TAKE HEART.
BECAUSE I AM ASSURED BY OUR LEADERSHIP THAT THIS IS NOT OVER. NOT IN THE LEAST.
WE ARE GOING TO TAKE BACK THIS AREA...THIS SO-CALLED MUTANT TOWN...AND TRANSFORM IT BACK INTO THE MIDDLE EAST SIDE, AS IT WAS BEFORE THE UNHOLY CREATURES--
EXCUSE ME.
HEY THERE. HOW YOU DOING? LOVE WHAT YOU'VE DONE WITH THE PLACE.
LOOK, I'D LIKE TO SAY SOMETHING TO YOU GUYS, AND I'D REALLY APPRECIATE IT IF YOU LISTENED.
I KNOW YOU! YOU'RE MADROX! HOW DARE YOU PROFANE OUR GATHERING WITH YOUR FOUL PRESENCE!
I SHOULD HAVE KILLED YOU THE INSTANT I SAW YOU--!

BLAM
YOU'RE RIGHT. YOU SHOULD HAVE.
MUMF-MUMF-MUMF
I USED TO HAVE SUCH HOPE THAT, SOONER OR LATER, IT WOULD WORK OUT.
SUCH FAITH THAT EVENTUALLY OUR TWO RACES WOULD COME TO AN UNDERSTANDING.
THAT DARK PREMONITIONS OF THE FUTURE COULD BE AVOIDED.
AND I'VE COME TO REALIZE THAT PART OF THE REASON I'VE FELT LIKE THAT LATELY... WAS BECAUSE OF ONE GIRL.
BECAUSE SHE WAS SO BRIGHT, SO CHEERY AND FUNNY AND SOMEHOW SHE WAS ALWAYS SECURE IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THINGS WERE GOING TO WORK OUT.
BECAUSE SHE KNEW STUFF.

AND NOW SHE'S GONE.
AND THE ONLY FUTURE I KNOW IS FILLED WITH DESPAIR.
AND I...I HAVE TO STOP IT. AND I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START.
DOESN'T MEAN I WON'T GIVE IT A TRY.
OH, THANK GOD.
REINFORCEMENTS.
AND HERE I THOUGHT THIS WAS GOING TO BE BORING.

MADROX! YOU OKAY IN THERE?
I THOUGHT I HEARD A NOISE FROM AROUND THE BACK! DO YOU NEED ANY--?
THERE IS NO HOPE ANYMORE. LAYLA IS GONE.
THERE IS NO FAITH ANYMORE. RAHNE IS GONE.
WITHOUT THEM, THE ONLY THING THAT REMAINS IS TAKING ACTION, EVEN IF IT'S MINDLESS...AND BRUTAL...AND DESIGNED ONLY TO RELIEVE THE FURY THAT MAKES EVERY PART OF MY BRAIN FEEL LIKE IT'S ON FIRE.
THESE PURIFIERS PROBABLY THINK THEIR LEADER IS DEAD. THEY DON'T KNOW I WAS ONLY FIRING TRANQ BULLETS.
NO FAITH, NO HOPE...BUT I STILL HAVE COMPASSION. IT'S THE ONE THING THAT STILL SEPARATES ME FROM MY ENEMIES.
AND AS I SWEAT THROUGH THE MAKEUP THAT I'VE BEEN USING TO COVER MY TATTOO...
I FIND MYSELF WONDERING WHAT WILL BE REQUIRED... TO TAKE MY COMPASSION AWAY AS WELL.
WHAT WILL THE FINAL THING BE... THAT DESTROYS EVERYTHING I AM.


MY GOD THERESA, ARE YOU SURE...?
THE DOCTOR CONFIRMED WHAT THE TEST ALREADY TOLD ME. I'M SIX WEEKS ALONG, AND BEFORE YOU ASK, YES, JAMIE'S THE FATHER.
SO...LOOK, THERESA. DO YOU WANT ME TO COME ALONG? TO HOLD YOUR HAND?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
WELL, WHEN YOU GO FOR THE... YOU KNOW.
WAIT...M! YOU DON'T SERIOUSLY THINK I'D...CRIPES! WE'RE TALKING ABOUT A LIFE!
WHAT ABOUT YOUR LIFE, HUH? YOU DON'T NEED IT SADDLED WITH...I MEAN, COME ON! YOU'RE TOO YOUNG...!
I'M THE SAME AGE MY MOTHER WAS, MONET.
AND I'M SURE HER BEST FRIEND TOLD HER WHAT I'M TELLING YOU, EXCEPT MAYBE YOU'LL BE SMART ENOUGH TO LISTEN.
M, HAVEN'T YOU REALIZED HOW IMPORTANT EVERY LIFE IS IF OUR RACE IS TO SURVIVE?
OH, SO YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE ONE FOR THE TEAM. WONDERFUL.
AND MADROX? A FATHER? PLEASE. YOUR EMBRYO IS MORE MATURE.
MAYBE HE'LL SURPRISE YOU. AND SINCE WHEN ARE YOU MY BEST FRIEND?
WELL, WITH RAHNE GONE, I'M THE CLOSEST YOU'VE GOT.
RAHNE'S GONE? WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WHAT'S GOING ON AROUND HERE?


SOMETHING WEIRD IS GOING ON AROUND HERE, I'M TELLING YOU.
THE PEOPLE AT THE LOCAL E.R.... THEY'VE BEEN SEEING A LOT OF WHAT I'M SEEING.
MORE FIGHTS BREAKING OUT...HOSTILITIES AROUND TOWN.
IT'S LIKE THE POPULATION IS SPLITTING DOWN THE MIDDLE.
SPLITTING HOW?
WELL...IT USED TO BE THAT EVERYONE IN TOWN PULLED TOGETHER FOR MUTUAL PROTECTION AFTER THEIR POWERS VANISHED. BUT WHEN THOSE POWERS WENT...IT LEFT A FEW PEOPLE WITH VISIBLE SOUVENIRS OF THEIR MUTATIONS...
HORNS, BONE CRESTS, THE ODD TENTACLE...THAT KIND OF THING.
MOST PEOPLE, THOUGH, WOUND UP WHAT THEY CALL PANS..."PASS AS NORMAL." AS OPPOSED TO THE OTHERS WHO ARE REFERRED TO AS "REMNANTS" OR REMS.
HAVES AND HAVE-NOTS.
EXACTLY. AND THE PANS ARE SLOWLY STARTING TO MOVE OUT, FIGURING THERE'S NO POINT IN LIVING A SEGREGATED LIFESTYLE. AND THAT'S PISSING OFF THE REMS.
AND THEN THERE'S THIS CONTRACTOR WHO'S SPRUNG UP EVERYWHERE. I DUNNO WHAT'S UP WITH THAT.
WHAT'S THE REST OF THE TEAM SAY?
NO ONE WILL LISTEN TO ME. SIRYN AND MONET WERE IN THE BAR ACROSS THE STREET AND ALMOST TOOK MY HEAD OFF WHEN I TRIED TO INTERRUPT. GUIDO DITCHED ME AT THE E.R.
WAIT...MADROX! WHERE'RE YOU GOING?
HMM? OH... I'M NOT MADROX. I'M A DUPE. I'M GONNA GO SEE IF THERE'S A LATE-NIGHT PIZZA PLACE AROUND.
LATER.
GREAT.

FINE. SO NO ONE ELSE WILL LISTEN TO ME.
BUT RAHNE WILL. I KNOW IT. WE'RE ON THE SAME WAVELENGTH. ALWAYS HAVE BEEN.
IT'S HARD TO FIND THINGS TO BELIEVE IN.
AND EVEN HARDER IS, ONCE YOU'VE FOUND THEM...
...HOLDING ONTO THEM.
FAITH IS WHAT YOU CLING TO WHEN REASON SAYS THERE'S NO POINT.
HOPE IS WHAT YOU CLING TO IN THE ABSENCE OF REASON.
IN THE ABSENCE OF EVERYTHING...WHAT'S LEFT TO CLING TO?
GOD...PLEASE... SOMEBODY...
TELL ME.
TO BE CONTINUED...

PORTFOLIO REVIEW

In the wake of Messiah CompleX, there are no X-Men and young mutants Rockslide, Blindfold and Dust are alone and directionless. Until the day Cyclops recruits them to hunt the new incarnation of the Brotherhood – and kill them. Exactly who this new Brotherhood is and why Cyclops wants them dead are mysteries that will shock you! Joined by a pair of new recruits, the young X-Men learn a hard truth about the world post-Messiah CompleX: sometimes old allies make for deadly enemies.

So, just who made the cut to be in this new team and what do they bring to the table? We sat down with editor Nick Lowe to get the Lowe-down on each of the new members, as designed by series artist Yanick Paquette and hints as to what roles these kids will play!

Dust - "She's one of the most powerful mutants in the world. Her power is so versatile and, frankly, really scary. We've seen her peel the skin off people with her dust. She can get in and out of any building. We're just lucky she's a good guy, er, gal."

"Basically, Cyclops is personally making this the tightest platoon of X-Men ever. He's got big plans for these kids."

"One hint about the Brotherhood – this isn't the first time these characters have been new."

Ink - "He's a new character that you'll meet for the first time in #1. He's one to watch. His powers are really cool and there are some really BIG things planned for him."

Wolfcub - "He's going to surprise a lot of people. And tear the heck out of a lot of bad guys with his claws and teeth. He's much tougher than anyone gives him credit for and you'll see him rise to new heights in this book."

Rockslide - "The funniest character in all the X-Men, by far. We've all known someone like Rockslide. He's kind of a jerk, but you love him anyway. But in this series he's going to be put through the wringer and you're going to see a lot of new aspects of his personality."

Greymalkin - "He's the big mystery of the first five issues, and that's all you're getting from me about him."

YOUNG X-MEN #1

Marc Guggenheim • Yanick Paquette

Cover by Terry Dodson

APRIL 2008

LOOK WHO'S TALKING!

AWARD-WINNING COMIC BOOK WRITER MARK MILLAR

MARVEL: *So, first off, welcome back to the Marvel Universe! It's been one year since Civil War ended – what do you think about the state of the Marvel Universe post-Civil War?*

MARK MILLAR: In a word? Exciting. It really reminds me of the Marvel Universe I first discovered when I was a little kid. Marvel books always seemed a little more real and frightening than DC books. It wasn't a world where the heroes were quite as comfortable with one another. Even when they met, they were always fighting, whereas the DC guys always seemed like they were going fishing together when they were off-duty. I like the slightly uncomfortable feel of the new Marvel Universe. The idea that it's constantly in flux.

MARVEL: *The FF played a huge role in Civil War, and you left them in a pretty rocky place. Now that you are returning to the team, do you plan on picking up with any of the threads you introduced?*

MARK MILLAR: Very much so. Civil War was all about pulling something apart. It was always about a line being drawn down the middle of the Marvel Universe. But now my spider-sense tells me that the time is right for reconciliation. This is all about building things up and making people feel good again. It's very much a response to the gloominess of *Civil War*.

MARVEL: *You've said that this is a love letter to Stan Lee & Jack Kirby. How much of their original 102-issue run has influenced your planned year?*

MARK MILLAR: It's influenced us enormously in the sense that we're never referring to them even once. Why? Because the lesson we've hopefully learned from the Lee and Kirby run is to do comics our own way. You have to look at the historical context of the first *Fantastic Four*. This was a book that broke all the rules and constantly changed. It was unlike anything else around at the time and we have to try to do something similar. Of course, it needs to feel like Fantastic Four, but were Stan and Jack a couple of thirty-somethings now I feel they would make the book their own by panel 3.

MARVEL: *That said, you're known for presenting long-established characters in unique ways. In one sentence, give us your take on each member of the Fantastic Four:*

Reed – They call Reed Mister Fantastic because he's the toughest, coolest, best-looking, craziest and smartest superhero in the Marvel Universe. This is something they missed in the movies, I think. But Reed isn't a nerd by any means. He's fought Galactus, for God's sake. I know that's more than one sentence, but I feel passionate about it.

Sue – She's the glue that holds the family together, the powerful link between Reed, Johnny, Franklin and Valeria and the secret power behind the throne (like all wives).

Johnny – He's the rock star of the Marvel Universe.

Ben – The heart of the team.

Doom – Victor's the weird uncle Dad doesn't talk to anymore, the big split in the family.

MARVEL: *Yep, Doom. Preview art indicated you will be using Doom. How about a nice tease to that?*

MARK MILLAR: I thought long and hard about using Doom because I didn't want this to be Fantastic Four's greatest hits. That's tempting when you have someone like Bryan Hitch on the book, because you naturally want to see his Mole Man and Black Bolt and Silver Surfer and so on. But we both agreed early on that the reason the book hasn't sold as well as it did in its heyday is because the family hasn't been allowed to grow organically. I think FF has probably had the greatest number of top creators out of any book in history and yet the book has been stuck in the middle of the charts since maybe the early seventies. I considered this a great deal and I really think it's because all those big changes that made it radical happened in those first ten years and since then it's stayed the same size. Any family that hasn't grown in 35 years is going to feel diminished. And so we've tried to throw as many new concepts and characters out there as we can. Doom will be used, but only in a way he hasn't been done before.

MARVEL: *There have also been rumors of an all-girl group. Care to spill?*

MARK MILLAR: Johnny's out there copping off with all these top birds and Reed's busy with his experiments when they aren't saving the world. But I felt like Sue really needed something to do. She's smart and resourceful and is one of the best-connected people in the world, so I wanted her to get together with Stark International and start a superhuman relief effort to help victims of super-villain crime. This can be big or small and it's a charity she's started up with She-Hulk and Wasp. Mommy's essentially going out to work now.

MARVEL: *What about new characters? Reed's ex?*

MARK MILLAR: Yeah, she's great fun. It just always struck me that Reed would have had someone prior to Sue, since he's ten years older than she is. Also, Sue's so different from Reed that I felt the girl out there would be much more like he was, a female Reed Richards of sorts, and someone he'd have met at university. As luck would have it, Chris Claremont created exactly such a character and her name is Alyssa Moy. Her nickname in our story is Mrs. Fantastic and you'll see why when you read the first issue.

MARVEL: *Finally, your partner in crime – Bryan Hitch. Of all the artists you have worked with, why Hitch on Fantastic Four?*

MARK MILLAR: The same two reasons I wanted him on *Ultimates*. First, he's the best in the business, bar none. He's just the greatest artist of this generation and I can't believe my luck to have him on another project. Secondly, and this is my weird answer, because he brings the same realism to superheroes as John Buscema and the Buscema reprints were my introduction to Fantastic Four as a kid. When I think of Reed, it's Buscema's version I see.

MARVEL: *Who is your favorite character for Bryan to draw?*

MARK MILLAR: I love his Baxter Building, if that doesn't sound too odd. Together with Paul's colors, it really looks like an actual place. I want to live there.

MARVEL: *Any final words?*

MARK MILLAR: Buy this book. It's friggin' awesome.

'Nuff Said!

My name's Ed. I get to scan. YAY! Better than you lady! YAY! I scanned my butt. YAY!

YAY! DCP YAY! Hey lady, say it with me. YAY DCP YAY!!!!

YAY! Oroboros teamed with me! YAY! He scanned his butt too! YAY. YAY DCP YAY!